

But one such soldier returns from battle to America with a flag-draped coffin. He is Cody Norris, Army private first class, a machine gunner in the infantry, just 20 years old, barely an adult, but still an all-American man.

For the Norris family in La Porte, Texas, Cody was a son and a little brother. He died in a gun battle last week in Afghanistan for our country. He was the 38th warrior in my area of Texas to give his life for his country.

Cody grew up in La Porte. He graduated from La Porte High School just last year, but he quickly volunteered for the United States Army in October.

In high school, Cody loved to restore old military trucks. He restored a 1952 Dodge M-37 Army truck and drove it to school. He was a member of the Junior ROTC Color Guard at La Porte High School. But this year, his former classmates and peers in the Color Guard honored his life.

He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas, before deploying to Afghanistan. It was his first deployment in Afghanistan.

October 1 marked his 1-year anniversary in the United States Army. Cody was killed in Kandahar province last week on November 9 when the enemy forces attacked his unit with small-arms fire.

Kandahar province in Afghanistan has been called the birthplace and fateful home of the notorious Taliban. It is a dangerous part of the world. I've been to Afghanistan several times, and the sun is unbearable in the summer and the cold is brutally piercing in the winter. And our soldiers fight on, undeterred, tenaciously focused.

They go to battle in a land seemingly cursed by God. Our military in Afghanistan go where others fear to tread and the timid are not found.

When I spoke to Cody's mother, Teresa Denise Norris, she told me Cody marched to the beat of his own drum. He didn't care what others thought of him; he did what he thought was right.

She said Cody was proud to be a soldier and that their family believes in the red, white and blue; and they all love this country. That pride is carried through in Cody's older brother, Michael Norris. He's a cadet in his last year at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

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The Norris family is a soldier's family. Cody's Facebook page is filled with heartfelt messages from his friends, classmates, and fellow soldiers. It is evident how much he made people laugh in his very young life.

Cody wrote on his Facebook in the "About Me" section, "I'm in the Army and I am an infantryman. I love what I do as my job and my dream in life, and no one can take that away from me. I am trained by the best, and I will be the best I can. Wanna do all I can for the ones I love and my country—to

keep us all free, even if it means death, so that every American can live their dreams out as well."

Cody loved what he did. He loved his country. He was selfless, and he was an American patriot.

For his service in the United States Army, Cody has been awarded the Army Commendation Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with two campaign stars, and the NATO Medal and the Combat Infantry Medal.

Cody Norris was a part of the rare breed, the American breed—soldiers who take care of the rest of us and watch for the evildoers who would bring us harm. They prove their commitment to America by giving their lives for this Nation.

General George Patton said of the fallen soldiers, "Let us not only mourn for the men who have died fighting, but let us be grateful to God that such men ever lived."

Mr. Speaker, we are grateful to Private First Class Cody Norris and that he lived. He was a Texan, a soldier, an American Warrior.

And that's just the way it is.

NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BASS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 12th Annual National Adoption Day this Friday, November 18. As we prepare for Thanksgiving festivities with loved ones, many of us take for granted our opportunity to spend time with family and friends. But for thousands of foster youth around the country, celebrating a holiday with a permanent family remains out of reach.

In the United States today there are more than 400,000 children in foster care, some waiting years to be adopted by a permanent, loving family. Although the number of youth without a home seems discouraging, there is hope.

This week, in recognition of National Adoption Day, an unprecedented number of courts in 400 communities throughout the country will open their doors to finalize the adoption of thousands of children from the foster care system.

National Adoption Day is a nationwide effort to raise awareness of children in foster care who are eligible and waiting for adoption, as well as to celebrate families that have been chosen to make a lasting difference in the life of a child through adoption or relative-based care.

Since 2000, more than 35,000 children have been adopted through National Adoption Day activities. This year, nearly 5,000 adoptions will be finalized. In California alone, my home State, 500 youth will be adopted through these special events.

While the number of children in foster care has significantly decreased

over the past decade, the number of adoptions has remained unchanged. Youth often wait years in foster care before finding a permanent family through adoption. During their time in foster care, children are moved from home to home, changing schools, losing friends, coping with separation from siblings, and wondering if they will ever have anyone to call Mom or Dad again.

What's worse is that nearly 28,000 youth age out of foster care each year never having been adopted, often going through life alone without the support systems children with permanent families have, not to mention sharing holiday traditions or a family meal.

As the cochair of both the Congressional Coalition on Adoption and the Foster Youth Caucus, I look forward to continuing to work in a bipartisan fashion to identify solutions to improve the quality of life for our Nation's most vulnerable children.

National Adoption Day reminds us that it is our responsibility and in our best interest to find solutions to ensure children have the opportunity to live in a safe and loving home. Nearly 48 million Americans have considered adopting from foster care, according to a recent national survey. If just one in 500 of these adults adopt, all the 107,000 children in foster care waiting for adoption would have permanent families to help create Thanksgiving traditions of their own.

In closing, in this spirit of giving thanks, I'd like to express sincere gratitude to all of the adoptive parents, relative caregivers, and child welfare caseworkers. Their commitment to improving the lives of today's youth is truly commendable.

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Washington has a problem. It spends more than it brings in, and it has been doing that for a long time. That's why we are over \$15 trillion in debt. That's over \$46,000 of debt for every American man, woman, and child. Washington is currently borrowing 36 cents out of every dollar it spends, and under President Obama, our national debt has increased 34 percent. That's the fastest increase in the debt under any U.S. President in history.

Our government is digging a hole it might never get out of. We don't have the money, yet Big Government hasn't been able to restrain itself and keeps putting more and more of its spending on a credit card—our children's credit card.

Our national debt-to-GDP ratio rivals that of countries like Ireland, Portugal, and Greece, which are facing sovereign debt crises. Soon our Nation's Federal debt will equal our GDP. It is a losing proposition. It's like